

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PARIS 20308 271044Z

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ACTION EB-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CAB-09 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00

 DOTE-00 INR-11 NSAE-00 RSC-01 FAA-00 DRC-01 /059 W

----- 069060

R 271032Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1797

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

FAA BRUSSELS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAIR, FR

SUBJECT: CIVAIR: NEW DIRECTOR GENERAL OF AIR FRANCE

REF: PARIS 19851

1. SUMMARY: WE ARE TOLD THAT NEW DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF AIR FRANCE WILL BE PRESIDENT GISCARD'S HAND-PICKED CANDIDATE, PAUL MENTRE DE LOYE, WHO WAS FORMERLY IN GISCARD'S CABINET AT FINANCE MINISTRY AND IS NOW ONE OF DIRECTORS OF CREDIT NATIONAL.

2. JEAN-MARIE RICHE, EDITOR OF FRANCE'S LEADING AVIATION WEEKLY AIR ET COSMOS AND ONE OF THE BEST INFORMED PERSONS ON THE FRENCH CIVAIR SCENE, TELLS US THAT NEITHER OF THE FRONTRUNNERS MENTIONED (REFTEL) TO REPLACE PIERRE COT AS DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF AIR FRANCE WILL GET THE JOB. INSTEAD, SAYS RICHE, IT IS TO GO TO PAUL MENTRE DE LOYE, WHO WAS GISCARD'S DEPUTY DIRECTEUR DE CABINET AT THE FINANCE MINISTRY FROM 1971 UNTIL APPOINTED IN 1973 ONE OF THE DIRECTORS OF THE PUBLIC CREDIT ESTABLISHMENT CREDIT NATIONAL. WHILE LATHIERE (REFTEL) HAS THE BACKING OF PRIME MINISTER CHIRAC (A CLASSMATE OF LATHIERE AT ECOLE NATIONALE D'ADMINISTRATION -- LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 02 PARIS 20308 271044Z

ENA), ACCORDING TO RICHE, MENTRE DE LOYE IS PRESIDENT

GISCARD D'ESTAING'S PERSONAL CHOICE.

3. RICHE SAID THAT COT'S RESIGNATION IS EFFECTIVE SEPT. 30. CONFIRMING REFTEL REPORT THAT COT'S DEPARTURE WAS VOLUNTARY AND THAT HE WAS NOT BEING EASED OUT, RICHE SAID COT HAD TOLD HIM THAT AS HE MOVED CLOSER TO OBLIGATORY RETIREMENT AGE AT AIR FRANCE HE HAD BEEN UNABLE TO RESIST A TEMPTING OFFER FOR A BETTER, LONGER-TERM JOB OUTSIDE. COT ALSO REMARKED SMUGLY THAT, IN FACT, HE WAS THE FIRST DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF AIR FRANCE IN SOME TIME TO STEP DOWN OF HIS OWN FREE WILL.

4. MENTRE DE LOYE (PRONOUNCED MAWN-TRAY DE LUH-WUH, WITH ACCENT ON FIRST AND LAST SYLLABLES) IS 39 YEARS OLD, AN INSPECTEUR DES FINANCES, AND A GRADUATE OF BOTH ENA AND ECOLE POLYTECHNIQUE. HE IS MARRIED AND HAS TWO CHILDREN.

5. COMMENT: EMBASSY HAS HAD CORDIAL RELATIONS WITH MENTRE DE LOYE DATING BACK TO HIS YEARS IN TREASURY WHERE HE WORKED ON EXTERNAL FINANCIAL AFFAIRS BEFORE BECOMING DEPUTY DIRECTEUR DE CABINET AT FINANCE MINISTRY. HE IS BRIGHT, IS CLOSE TO GISCARD, AND IS DEFINITELY AN UP AND COMER. STONE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PERSONNEL APPOINTMENTS, CADIDATES, AIRPORTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 AUG 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974PARIS20308
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740236-0693
From: PARIS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740815/aaaaamdc.tel
Line Count: 87
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EB
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: PARIS 19851
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 APR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <05 APR 2002 by shawdg>; APPROVED <26 JUN 2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CIVAIR: NEW DIRECTOR GENERAL OF AIR FRANCE
TAGS: EAIR, FR, AIR FRANCE, (DE LOYE, PAUL MENTRE)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005